



CHAPTER ONE

The Nuthead Press of Jamestown, St. Mary's and Annapolis— William Nuthead, the Inaugurator of Printing in Virginia and Maryland—Dinah Nuthead, his Successor



IN THE year 1671, the Lords Commissioners of Foreign Plantations addressed to Sir William Berkeley, the royal governor of Virginia, a series of questions relating to the state of his government. In his reply to that one of the questions which had to do with religious education in the colony, Sir William, a choleric old gentleman, who had been much vexed by the local radicals, evinced the wrong-headed honesty of conviction which characterized many of his utterances and actions. "I thank God," he wrote, "*there are no free schools nor printing and I hope we shall not have these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, . . . God keep us from both!*"¹

It is plainly to be perceived from this declaration that there existed small chance for the establishment of a press in Virginia under the Berkeley régime, but Sir William's long governorship came to an end eventually, and in the year 1682, during the administration of Lord Culpeper, Mr. John Buckner,² a merchant of Gloucester County, brought in a press and a printer and set up at Jamestown the second printing establishment of English America. Begun auspiciously enough, what seems to have been the first venture of this partnership met with such ill favor from the authorities as to discourage further attempts at printing in Virginia for many years. The action of the Virginia Council on hearing that Buckner's press was preparing to issue certain session laws is told in the following record:³

Att a Councell held att James Citty February 21: 1682/3. . . .

Mr. John Buckner being by his Excellency Thomas Lord Culpeper ordered to appear

¹ Hening, W. W., *Statutes at Large . . . of Virginia*, 2: 517.

² John Buckner, Gent., the ancestor of a numerous family in the United States, patented 1,000 acres of land in Gloucester County in 1669, and became a merchant with wide connections in Maryland and Virginia. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 1: 406, and *William and Mary College Quarterly*, 7: 9, 10 and 11.

³ Public Record Office: C. O. 5. vol. 51, No. 42, 1683, Jan.-May. See *Cal. State Papers, Col. Ser. A. & W. I.*, 1681-1685, p. 390, No. 961.